



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: June 6, 2013
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Neighborhood Planning Committee
SUBJECT: Final Recommendation on Proposed Amendments to *District 9 Area Plan Summary*

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 3, 2013 on proposed changes to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* recommended by the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation. Two people spoke in favor of the proposed amendments, with one speaker recommending changes to the proposed amendments to address concerns raised by the Planning Commission that some of the guidelines are too specific and may conflict (or be confused) with zoning dimensional standards. No written comments were received.

The Neighborhood Planning Committee met on May 22 to discuss the public hearing testimony and consider the changes presented by one of the speakers. The Committee supported the recommended changes, but had additional concerns with the DON'T photos. They were concerned that the images might come off as "scolding" or "punishing," and that the facades may change over time (maybe even become a DO) but yet be frozen as a DON'T. The image that was of particular concern is the DON'T photo on page 9, since it so clearly indicates the business name. The Committee asked that staff work with the proposers to get a new photo for this guideline.

City staff asked the proposers to submit a "suite" of photos for consideration to replace the DON'T image on p. 9. In response, the community representatives submitted new images for several of the DON'T examples and, in some cases, edited the caption. A new draft of the proposed plan amendments is attached, with the following new images:

- page 4, top picture
- page 5, both pictures
- page 7, the one picture
- page 9, the one picture
- page 11, the one picture

For the caption to the DON'T image on page 6, a sentence is added about the structure recently being rehabbed; and on page 9, the caption is expanded to indicate that backlit fluorescent signs should not be used.

Neighborhood Planning Committee
June 6, 2013
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Staff feels that these changes adequately address the Committee's concerns, and supports approval of the revised document by the Planning Commission and submittal to the City Council for final adoption.

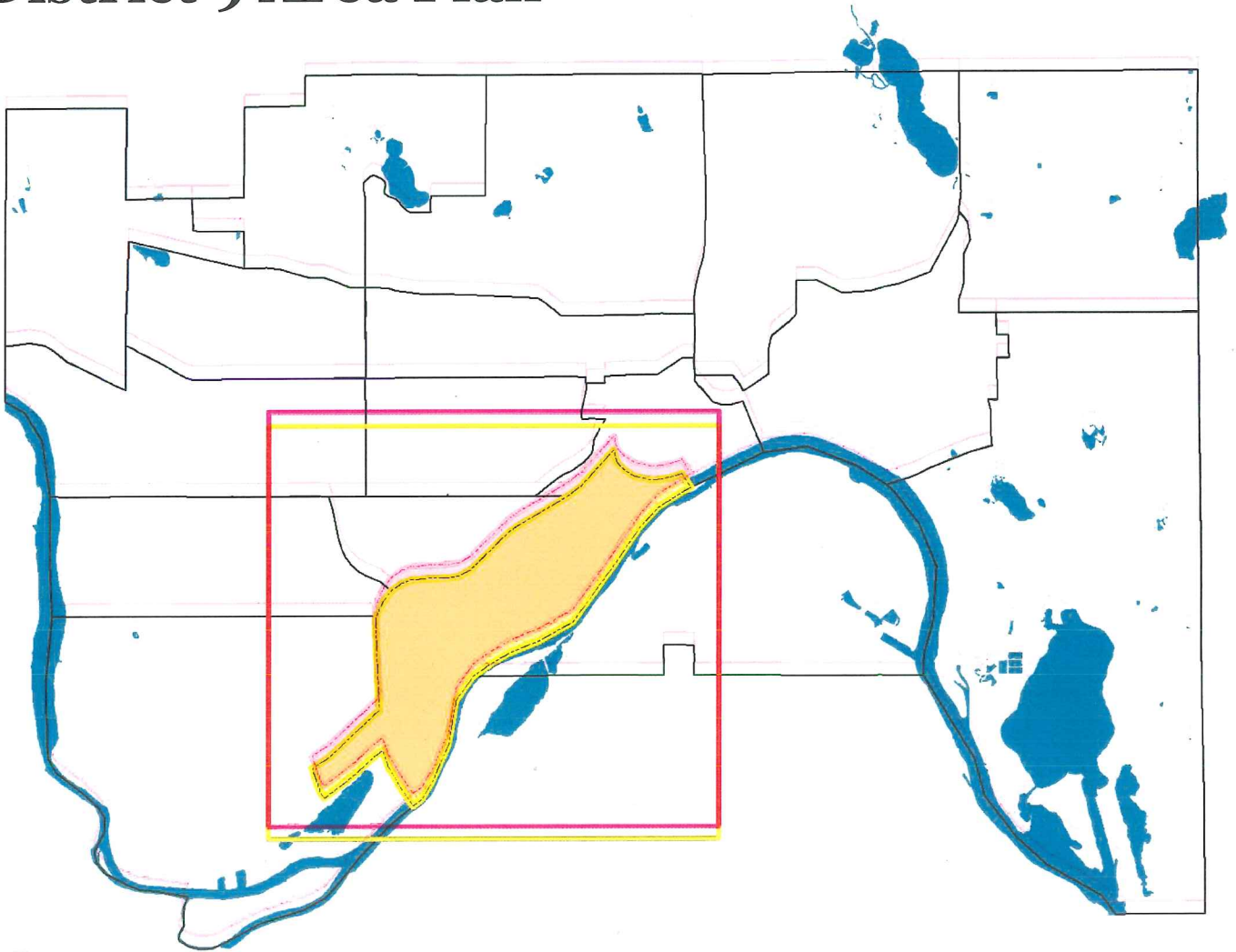
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the final draft of the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* amendments and forward them to the City Council for final adoption. A resolution is attached for your consideration. After the Planning Commission's approval, staff will incorporate the proposed amendments into the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* prior to consideration by the City Council.

Attachments

West 7th/Fort Road

District 9 Area Plan



Source: RDE Server
Prepared by: H. P. Staff
City of Salt Lake
February 2008

Summer 2006

Amended 2012

West 7th/Fort Road District 9 Area Plan

Summer 2006

Amended 2012

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Historic Preservation and Aesthetics

West 7th is steeped in the history of St. Paul. Our comprehensive district plan is worth nothing if it does not reflect the value of the historic roots of our community. We recognize that we cannot be a museum, but new development should complement the existing community. Specific areas that have sustained their character for more than 100 years need special attention to ensure that they are not lost to development and gentrification during the next decades.

The aesthetic quality of our physical environment is based on the *Fort Road Design Guidelines*, adopted in 1979¹. The guidelines have been updated and represent the community's aesthetic preferences for commercial developments are still relevant today. An abbreviated summary of the guidelines with examples of appropriate and inappropriate designs are included in the appendix.

¹ The *Fort Road Design Guidelines* were reviewed and expanded in this chapter and an appendix was added in Summer 2012.

Preserve historic character of the community

It is advantageous that the majority of the housing and commercial buildings that exist today are original to the community. This also means that the structures can be costly to maintain and improve. Others may be threatened by demands to utilize higher economic uses of commercial and residential areas.

Urban design guidelines

Urban design guidelines need to be enforced to ensure an aesthetic environment that supports the character of the community and enhances the neighborhood's quality of life. Because of the age of the community, new developments need to respect the historic antecedents, where appropriate, while creating a living and working environment for the 21st century. Design guidelines are iterated in the *Fort Road Design Guidelines* as well as in each of the small area plans adopted since 2000. Recent adoption by the City of Saint Paul of Traditional Neighborhood Districts zoning include design guidelines (Sec. 66.343), which are supported in this plan.

New construction, particularly along West 7th, should have the scale, proportions, colors, rhythm of solids and voids, and expression in character with adjacent buildings. Contemporary design is supported if sympathetic to the streetscape. The first floor should be active and have a strong relationship to the sidewalk. Where original storefronts remain, their character should not be altered. Existing historic elements should be repaired, preserved and maintained. When possible, storefronts that have been altered should be restored to, or close to, their original character. In some cases, the original building fabric may be found behind the alterations. In all cases, as much original fabric should be maintained as possible. The back of commercial buildings should not be neglected from the perspective of shoppers or residents. Mechanical systems should not be located in public view.

Street furniture along West 7th should provide continuity and a welcoming pedestrian scale. Historic lanterns should be installed along the entirety of West 7th.

Examples of appropriate designs are included in the appendix.

Preserve historic character of the community

Actions:

- Consider phased development of the Schmidt Brewery including interim usage of some of the buildings.
- Pursue local and National Register designation for the Schmidt Brewery historic buildings.
- Pursue local designation of the Leech/McBoal and Butternut neighborhoods, either as individual buildings or as districts.
- Pursue local and National Register designation of the original limestone residential and commercial buildings in West 7th.
- Restore the original Fire Station #1 that was designed by Capp Wittington, currently owned by Kraus Anderson St. Paul.
- Maintain commercial facades along West 7th and restore their original features.
- Preserve the Island Station building.
- Explore loan programs that are targeted to the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Identify funds to target rehabilitation to older structures (similar to Dayton's Bluff Guidelines).
- Promote use of historic house/building tax credits as an incentive for rehabilitation.

Urban design guidelines

Actions:

- Utilize and enforce the *Fort Road Design Guidelines* to address commercial development along West 7th.
- Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines to guide improvements to the physical environment to reduce crime (i.e., develop defensible spaces) and improve the aesthetic environment.
- Encourage green roofs and LEED-compliance with sustainability standards in commercial buildings.
- Encourage redevelopment that maintains appropriate scale and view sheds towards the river and to the upper bluff including the Cathedral and the Capitol.
- Improve the appearance of entrances to the community with sidewalks and landscape buffers.
- Maintain the existing urban street grid and reestablish it in the Schmidt Brewery site development.
- Develop the intersection at Randolph and Shepard Road to be more welcoming as a central gateway intersection of the community integrating it from Shepard Road to 35-E.
- Improve the southeast intersection of West 7th and Jefferson to respect the importance of this intersection as the keystone of the redevelopment of the Schmidt Brewery.
- Enforce the *Victoria Park Master Plan* guidelines.

Appendix

Examples of successful and not so successful designs for commercial development are included in this appendix. By providing design examples mostly from the community, aesthetic preferences of West 7th will be clear to commercial owners as they work with the community and the St. Paul city staff in developing their properties. The guidelines will help to retain the uniqueness of West 7th. In general, these guidelines strive to support developments whereby adjacent buildings should work together to create a common street character (unifying) but also to allow diversity and individual expression to avoid monotony (diversifying).

Shop Fronts

Shop fronts should emphasize pedestrian scale along the sidewalk. There should be a strong sense of entry, frequently recessed, and windows should allow pedestrians to view inside. Windows should be kept at their original scale in old buildings. In the 1870's, innovation in storefront design was possible because of the development of large plate glass windows and cast iron for frames. Over time, many of these storefronts were bricked in and large signs attached to attract automobile drivers, ignoring the pedestrian shopper. Newly constructed buildings should have a similar proportion (width to height ratio) of the facades of adjacent buildings. The new facades should be consistent in the number of bays, size, and proportions and number of openings with that of neighboring buildings. And, the height of new commercial structures should be a minimum of two stories and ideally within 10% of generally consistent with the height and setback of adjacent structures. One-story buildings should be avoided. Commercial buildings should have zero setback from the sidewalk and be in line with adjacent structures.

DO:



This block of buildings has maintained the entries and windows at the street level to appeal to shoppers. Keeping the original windows on the second and third floors, as well, maintains the structures' historic character.

DON'T:



These pictures show buildings that have lost their original integrity through the blocking up of the store fronts, and elimination of original building details (such as cornices).

Windows

Next to the material of a building, the size, shape, placement, and trim of windows constitute the major character-creating element of the building. In restoring an historic building, the practice of “blocking-up” or “blocking-down” existing window openings to fit a smaller than original window should be avoided because it does more than any other single element to change the basic appearance of a building—seldom for the better. Use of an interior sloped or boxed soffit can allow the window to retain its full height. In new construction, windows should provide character and evidence of human occupancy.

DO:

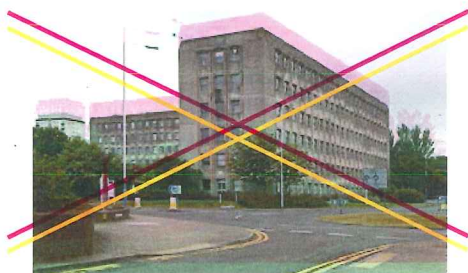


In the first picture, windows were restored at the street level in this series of commercial buildings (however, cornices are missing).



In this newly constructed building on the left, appropriately-sized windows at the street level and in the second floor residential units are designed to be functional and reflect proportions of older structures.

DON'T:



Windows in this large office building are monotonous and lack interest.



In the building to the left, original first floor windows were removed and replaced with windows that do not conform to the building's historic character. The rectangular horizontal orientation of the first floor windows is incompatible with the age of the structure. Finally, the shutters on the second floor are decorative, not original replacements, and would not cover the windows even if they were functional.

Exterior Materials

Existing masonry should not be covered with other materials, but should be maintained in a manner that will preserve it. Waterproofing, water repellant coatings and sandblasting should be avoided as they can accelerate deterioration of the masonry. When tuck-pointing the joints, new mortar should duplicate the original mortar in composition, color, and joint profile. In new construction, materials should be used that complement other nearby structures that have kept their original materials, such as stone and brick.

DO:



Maintenance of the original brick, stone and other materials makes this a successful historic structure.



Use of two color tones of brick horizontally delineating commercial and residential floors is effective in this new construction.



Use of blocks of material types creates visual interest and a sense of entry.



Use of brick and metal reflecting an industrial physical form is appropriate for this new construction in a former industrial area.

DON'T:

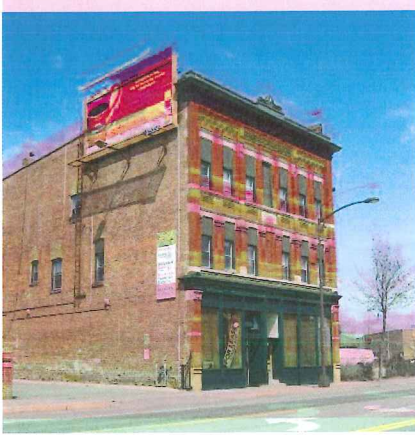


The first floor of the building to the left was covered with materials inappropriate to the materials used in the original structure. The first floor has since been rehabilitated.

Cornices

Cornices are projections from buildings that help to keep rainwater away from the front of the structure. They are most often at the top of a building, creating a “crown” effect, but they may also be above a lower floor as well, creating a more human scale to the building. Historically, each building usually had a distinct cornice style, and when combined in a streetscape they had a unifying effect. Cornices should be restored to their original appearance as much as possible. A new, sympathetic cornice could be used to replace a cornice beyond repair. Cornices can be applied to structures to help unify the façade of the streetscape when the building is out of character with the rest of the streetscape and when there is a break in the cornice flow.

DO:



In the picture to the left, cornices were preserved on an historic office building. At the first floor level, the cornice contributes to making the building pedestrian friendly. At the top of the building, the cornice “finishes” the façade setting off the architectural elements of the structure. The topmost façade can also hide mechanical systems.



In this newly constructed building, a cornice at the top of the building is complementary to other cornices in the area.

DON'T:



The cornices at the tops of the buildings are still somewhat intact, but the cornices above the first floor have been changed over time.

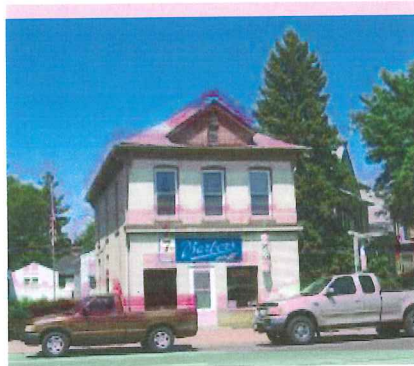
Roofs

Roofs retaining their original shape should be maintained and preserved. Deteriorated roof coverings should be replaced with new material that matches the old in color and texture. Roofs can help in hiding mechanical systems from the street and from other viewpoints of the building. All architectural features which give the roof its essential character such as dormers, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting, etc., should be preserved or replaced where necessary.

DO:



Each of these structures has kept its original roof line and features, including a residential structure that is now used for commercial purposes.



Graphics

The use of graphics on buildings should be kept in character with the age of the building. Signs should be pedestrian oriented in size while also allowing for identification from vehicles. Signs should be simple and bold, attracting the passerby, both driving and walking. Signs should not be above the sill of the second floor unless it reflects a different occupant than that of the first floor. Projecting signs should clear the sidewalk by at least eight feet and have a horizontal rather than a vertical format. Graphics painted or stenciled in shop front windows were common, historically. The clutter and chaotic diversity of signs can be a problem, and is compounded by large signs and lighting techniques. The resulting visual environment is extremely confusing to one not familiar with the area, making it difficult to find a particular store or place. Paper and vinyl signs attached to store windows and buildings should be discouraged unless they are for a temporary public notice.

DO:



Each of these examples displays signage appropriate to the era of the building. The signage is clear, easy to read from the sidewalk and from a car, and the signage does not restrict views into the building. Note that graphics painted on an awning is also traditional for historic buildings. Lighting of signs should be similar to the period.



DON'T:

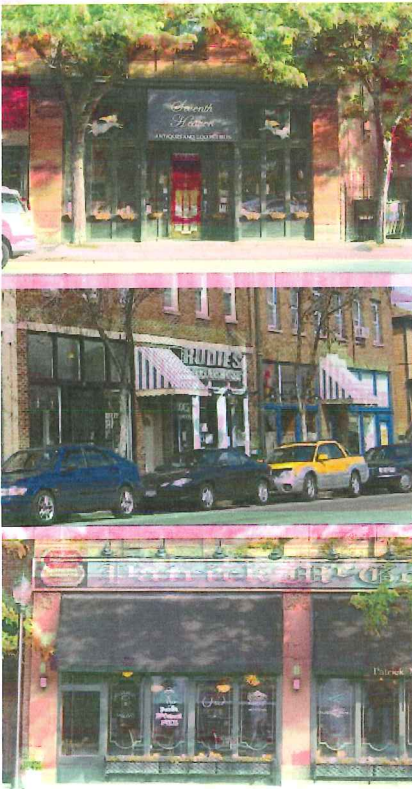


The material, lettering, and size of the sign at the left is not complementary to the age and integrity of the building. Additionally, plastic display signs, backlit with fluorescent lamps are inappropriate for the majority of existing commercial structures, particularly for those buildings built before 1970.

Awnings

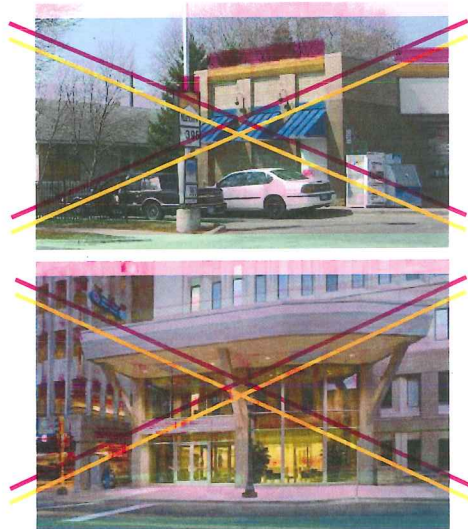
Awnings provide shelter from the natural elements, and create a feeling of protection and human scale. People are drawn to walk beneath them and view shop front displays, an important factor in increasing sales. Colors are encouraged when complementary to the building. The size and scale of the awnings should be appropriate to the building openings and care should be taken not to cover any fine details on the façade. Awnings at the second and third floor levels should not be used unless documentary evidence shows that they existed on that building.

DO:



The awnings in the three pictures on the left are simple, protective, and help to orient pedestrians to the buildings.

DON'T:



While the awnings in the picture to the left are simple and colorful, they have no purpose in relationship to the function of the building.

The “awning” on the lower picture overwhelms the pedestrian scale at the sidewalk.

Color

Color is an extremely important element in the street environment. Inappropriate colors and misuse of them can destroy the image of a building. Exterior colors should harmonize with other colors on the same building and with the colors on the street in general. Pastels were not a color tradition in the history of this community and should be avoided.

DO:



The use of variations in color can break up a large structure into smaller units, making it more interesting.



Paint colors selected for wood components of buildings should complement the other exterior colors and be appropriate to the age of the structure. Historic color palettes are carried by most major paint manufacturers. The National Register of Historic Places can also provide resources.



Sometimes, a burst of color on a building or on awnings can be effective, such as on the buildings on the left.

DON'T:



Given the number of bleak months during the year in St. Paul, plain concrete is not an effective color choice.

Building Rear

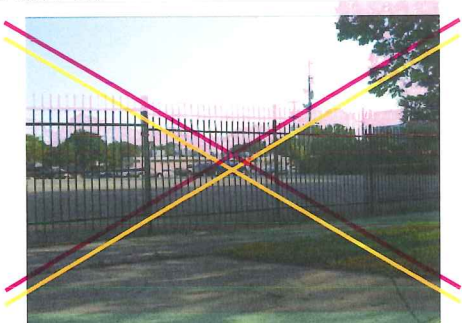
The design guidelines focus primarily on the front streetscape of commercial buildings along West 7th. But, the back of buildings should not be neglected when shoppers have access to them from parking lots. Space for delivery and trash and recycling can be developed to allow room for pedestrians. Landscaping and identification graphics should be used to improve the rear of buildings. Additionally, because West 7th transects the street grid, the front door of many residences faces the rear of commercial buildings; for others, they may share an alley. Below are some examples of how businesses have dealt with “their backdoor” in relationship to their shoppers and neighbors.

DO:



These three examples solve different parking and access situations, but each is attractive to shoppers and to neighboring properties.

DON'T:



Many residential properties face this fence and the large expanse of asphalt. Additional vegetation would soften the view for the residential and pedestrian community.

Street Furniture

Street furniture, both publicly and privately owned, provides necessary services to a pedestrian environment, as well as providing a continuous element on the street. Benches and waste receptacles should be carefully placed for convenience of use, and to not interfere with pedestrian walkways (maintain 6 feet clear for walking). Historic street lighting (lantern style) should be installed along the entire length of West 7th. Trees should be carefully placed so that they don't obscure business fronts. In the west end of West 7th, many more trees should be planted; in other areas, they should be used to fill in the massing of the facades. Parking lots should be screened by a fence or a masonry wall and landscaping. A standard form of street graphics, with a single lettering style and a limited and consistent number of colors, should be used for identification of the community of West 7th/Fort Road. After the original design guidelines were adopted by the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation, such a graphic was integrated into sidewalk imprints and signage. This should be integrated into new developments to strengthen the identity of West 7th/Fort Road.

DO:

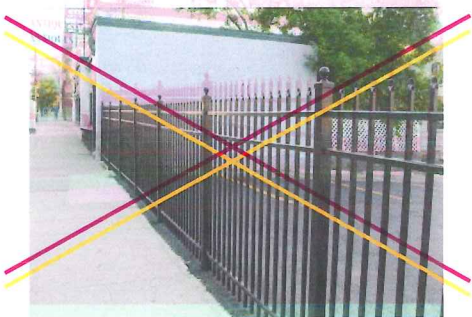


Street furniture can be used to accommodate and encourage healthy means of transportation. The bicycle rack allows for bikes to be parked without interfering with the sidewalk.



The trees were planted so that they do not block the entrance to this business. For additional greenery, large planters are used.

DON'T:



The fence material is appropriate to the streetscape, but trees should have been planted behind the fence to soften this edge and to fill in the void between commercial buildings.

Parking

Parking in West 7th needs to be addressed on a block by block basis. An area for potential parking development may be found in underutilized spaces behind existing commercial buildings. These areas have the potential of meeting the need for more and convenient parking. An alternative solution to parking is for businesses and adjoining properties to share parking when the uses occur at different times of day and different days of the week. For example, a retail store and a restaurant/bar have parking needs at different times of the day. A similar situation could occur with places of worship and restaurants. Another example for large parking is to create green space parking pods for overflow parking. Development of any parking should be coupled with an up-grading of the entire area including creation of a walk area having safe and attractive features, landscaping, benches, adequate lighting and well designed and effective signage for directions and identification.

DO:



On the left, access to a row of parking is narrow and the parked cars are partially shielded by vegetation and neighboring buildings.



The picture on the left shows the parking solution at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis. Each green parking pod accommodates four additional parking spaces when necessary.

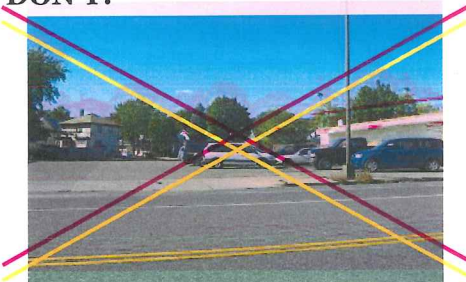


The view on the left is of parking located behind a commercial building, accessed through the alley. Decorative fencing and vegetation border the sidewalk.



In the picture below, an alley, access to underground parking and access to surface parking are each accommodated from a side-street. The way these are integrated provides a buffer between the back of residential structures on the left and the back of the commercial structure on the right.

DON'T:



There is no delineation between the busy street, the sidewalk, and the parking lot for the businesses, making it a vast expanse of pavement. Wide driveways into the lot also contribute to pedestrian and automobile safety concerns.

Scale

The relationship of the size of structures to one another and to pedestrians is a concern of “scale.” New construction does not have to be exactly the same size as adjacent buildings, but it ~~should ideally be within 10% of the height and setback should be generally consistent with that~~ of adjacent structures. One story buildings should be avoided given the urban environment of our community. Commercial buildings should have zero setback from the sidewalk, be in line with adjacent structures, and ~~in summary, we want the commercial strip to be “pedestrian friendly.”~~

DO:



The series of residential structures along West Seventh are each different in the number of stories, but they are acceptable in scale to one another because of the overall height of each.

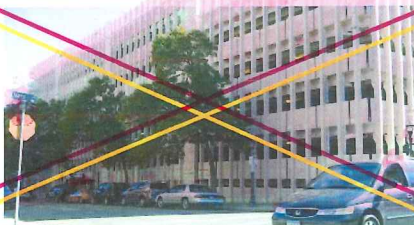


The commercial structure on the left has incorporated full height windows on the first floor and trees, and shrubs along the sidewalk to make it pedestrian-scale friendly.

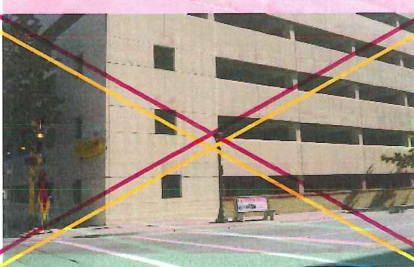
DON'T:



The height of the structure towers over its historic neighboring buildings. It is too tall compared to its adjacent buildings. It is more similar to heights of buildings in the central business district of St. Paul.



The sidewalks along the two parking garages on the left are brutal environments for pedestrians. The building structures overwhelm the pedestrian scale of the street and provide no refuge for pedestrians, albeit one lone bus stop bench.



city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

Amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary*

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council approved the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* in July 2010, upon recommendation of the Saint Paul Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, in May 2011, at the request of the City Council, the Planning Commission initiated the District 9 Commercial Zoning Study for the area bounded by Grand/Ramsey, Leech, Goodrich, W. 7th and Smith; and

WHEREAS, a result of the zoning study was the rezoning of several parcels in the study area from B3 General Business, B2 Community Business and VP Vehicular Parking to T2 Traditional Neighborhood in order to address a wide range of urban design issues of concern to adjacent residents; and

WHEREAS, there was lingering concern by neighborhood residents that the T2 design standards would not go far enough to fully address their concerns; and

WHEREAS, in response, the Planning Commission requested that PED staff continue to work with neighborhood, business and District 9 representatives and property owners to explore the best way to "codify" design guidelines for the gateway area; and

WHEREAS, PED staff met with a neighborhood working group convened by the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation and Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association from January 2012 through July 2012, exploring a range of planning and regulatory techniques to address outstanding urban design concerns in the gateway area and along W. 7th Street' and

WHEREAS, the group: 1) determined that amending the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* would be the most effective way to ensure that design issues were addressed; 2) prepared a set of proposed amendments; and 3) recommended them to the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation for submittal to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, in September 2012, the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation Board approved the proposed amendments for submittal to the Planning Commission; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission released the proposed amendments for public review on March 22, 2013 and set a public hearing date of May 3, 2013; and

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2013, the Planning Commission expressed concern about the specificity of some of the recommended guidelines and their potential conflict (or confusion) with zoning dimensional standards, but did not amend the hearing document prior to release; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments on May 3, 2013, notice of which was published in the St. Paul Legal Ledger on April 18, 2013 and sent to the City's Early Notification System list; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation spoke at the public hearing and presented changes to the proposed amendments to address concerns raised by the Planning Commission on March 22, 2013; and

WHEREAS, as the Neighborhood Planning Committee discussed public hearing testimony, it requested additional changes to the proposed amendments to address concerns about the reception of negative images by business and property owners; and

WHEREAS, community representatives submitted revised photographs for many of the DON'T images to address these concerns, and these images were considered by the Planning Commission on June 14, 2013;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends approval of the final draft of the proposed amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* considered on June 14, 2013, and forwards them to the City Council for final adoption.